

METAMORPHOSIS

TERM 2 2022
BIBLE STUDY BOOK

BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM – TERM 1 2022

Metamorphosis

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“This letter is the most important piece in the New Testament. It is the purest gospel. It is well worth a Christian’s while not only to memorise it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well”

- Martin Luther -

Many of us have probably heard impressive statements made by theological giants like Martin Luther who have called Romans “the purest gospel,” or Thomas Draxe describing the book as “the quintessence and perfection of saving doctrine.”

Yet although Romans is rich with profound doctrinal truth, we ought not be so intimidated. We must remember it is first written as a letter to real people in a unique circumstance and with a clear purpose.

At the very crux of Paul’s purpose for writing his letter to the church in Rome is the gospel. His desire is for the gospel to bring these Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome together but, at the same time, to see the good news of Jesus go out further and produce even more fruit.

For the past two years as we have worked through this letter we have looked exactly at what the gospel is: how Jesus has saved both Jew and Gentile through justifying work of the cross which is received by faith alone. We have also seen how since being justified, we are now dead to sin and alive in Christ, given the Holy Spirit which frees us from condemnation to live for Christ.

The final section of Romans (chapters 12-16) is often seen as the *easy* part of the book. Indeed, it far less theologically debated and much simpler to read. However, don’t let it deceive you; it hits you like a truck! Paul calls this church to live a transformed life. In response to the gospel, he calls them to offer every part of their lives to Jesus as a constant sacrifice to him. This could be anything but easy!

Just like a caterpillar’s metamorphosis into a butterfly, we often cannot imagine what we might become. But as we continue to submit ourselves to the scriptures and continue to look back at the mercies of God, it is my prayer we might see new beauty come from being changed by Jesus.

Study 1 How to offer yourself - Romans 12:1-2

Would you call yourself an optimist or a pessimist? Do you think people can change?

Read Romans 12:1

1. Chapter 12 begins a new section in the book that looks at how Christians are to live. What does Paul want the Romans to remember first?

2. How should what Jesus has done motivate them into action?

Read Hebrews 9:11-14; 27-28

3. Why did sacrifices have to be offered in the Old Testament?

4. Do we need to make sacrifices for our sin now? Why or why not?

5. What sacrifices are we to offer to God now? What is a living sacrifice?
(Romans 12:1)

6. What parts of your life are you reluctant to offer to God? How might you give the best parts of yourself in service of Jesus?

7. From these verses, what is worship of God?

Read Romans 12:2

8. What pattern does Paul not want them to follow? How can someone live in a way that doesn't please God?

9. The word for "transformed" in verse 2 is the word 'metamorphosis.' It is the process by which a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. How does this transformation help us think about our own transformation?

10. Share with the group something you want God to transform in your life.

Prayers

Pray for Brett and Mardi, Evie, Harriet, Olivia, and Willow Middleton. Please pray for Brett as he seeks to encourage, serve and build up the wider staff team. Pray for wisdom that he and the team develop ministry plans that will help St Luke's stay faithful and grow into the future.

Pray for Matt and Lauren, Ezra, Joanna and Samuel Thomas and their mission work with OMF International to an unreached people group in South East Asia.

Pray for the Sparks Family and their mission work making disciples in Spain.

Pray for the global COVID crisis and ask for wise decision making from leaders. Bring before God those who are physically or mentally ill, grieving or experiencing financial hardships due to the pandemic.

Study 2 How to Think about Yourself - Romans 12:3-8

What is worse, to have low self-esteem or to be “up-your-self”?

Read Romans 12:3

1. In verses 1-2, how has Paul just described how we should live?
2. Why is it so tempting to talk yourself up? What are we afraid will happen if we don't?
3. How does grace change the way we think about ourselves? (v.3)
4. What does it mean to “think of yourself with sober judgement”? Describe a person who thinks about themselves in this way. What do they do? What don't they do?

Read Romans 12:4-8

5. What image does Paul use to make his point? Why are the words “In Christ” so important?

6. Where else in the New Testament does Paul use this imagery? Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 & Ephesians 4:15-16. Why is it important to think about the church and our community in this way?

7. How does the illustration of the body change the way we think about:

- Others who are different to me?

- Others who I want to be?

- Others who I think I am are better than?

- Others who get more attention than me?

8. What gifts has God given you? How can you use your gifts to serve others?

9. It can be hard to know how God has gifted us. The people around us often notice it best. Each choose another person in the group and share with each other what gifts you think that person has.

Prayers

Pray for Jennie and Don Everist. Pray for Jennie as she ministers and cares for the people who attend the Thursday Communion Service. Pray for her as she continues to pray and care for those who are unable to attend, due to Covid.

Pray for Rob and Jo, Lili, and Jemma Copland. Pray for Rob's work as the Anglican Chaplain at the University of Wollongong and for his work as Campus Director of the University Bible Group.

Pray for David and Kathryn, Reuben and Felix Luis. Pray for David as Campus Director of Geelong Christian Union at the Deakin University Campus in Victoria.

Pray for Peter, Katharine, Noah and Atticus Yock. Pray as they work amongst the students at the campus of Griffith University.

Pray for our Prime Minister and government. Pray for our state and federal members, our Premier and government. We pray also for our local Council including our Mayor.

Study 3 How to Relate to Others - Romans 12:9-21

- Make a list of people it is easiest to love. Why is it easy to love them?
- Make a list of people it is hardest to love. Why is it hard to love them?

Read Romans 12:9-21

1. Do a quick recap: what has been Paul's main theme in verses 1-8?

2. From the passage fill in the table about what love is and is not.

What love is	What love is not

3. Share one way you are good at loving others, and one way you need to improve on loving others.

4. What does it mean to practice hospitality? Who are some strangers in your life who you can show this kindness towards? (v.13)

5. What is the normal response to those who hurt us? How are we told we should treat those who hurt us? (vv.14-18)

6. Who's job is it to repay wrongs? How should this comfort us? (v.19)

7. What do you think it means to "heap burning coals" on someone's head?

8. Can you think of a situation where you are facing opposition or hardship at the moment? What would it look like to "overcome evil with good"?

9. We must continue to remember that the call to this costly kind of love only comes “in view of God’s mercy.”

Read Romans 5:8-11

How has God shown his love for us? How should we love others in response to Jesus’ sacrifice?

Prayers

Pray for Colin as Office and Site Manager. We pray for energy and enthusiasm as he takes on this role looking after staff and the Church site. Pray for Eddie as he assists with the bookkeeping on a Wednesday. Pray for Lisa as Admin Assistant, as she looks after the administration of the Church.

Pray for Sarah and husband Tim and her work in India with BCTI and SIM.

Pray for Rachel and Michael Burgess as Rachel serves with AFES as a senior staff worker at the Australian Catholic University in North Sydney

Please pray that the way we welcome people would encourage them to seek Jesus and make St Lukes their home. Pray that we would continue to connect with hospitality and warmth.

Study 4 How to Show Respect - Romans 13:1-7

We have just completed a federal election. How do you feel about the leadership of our country?

Read Romans 13:1-7

1. Make a list of everyone in your life who is an authority.
2. What should our attitude be to authorities (v.1)?
3. Who are we told establishes all authority? What are we doing when we rebel against authority (vv.1-2)?
4. Why ought these Christians not be afraid? (vv.3-4)

5. How ought a Christian live if they were living under an evil authority?

6. What ought our attitude be towards paying taxes(v.6-7)?

7. Should a Christian go on strike or participate in a protest march? Explain your answer.

8. In what ways can you show that you honour our government, Prime Minister, Premier and local MPs?

9. At work or where you study, how is it easy to dishonour authorities? What are some practical ways you can show you honour or respect them?

10. What are some laws you break that you think don't matter? E.g. speeding, being dishonest when paying taxes, stealing from work, unlawfully sharing online streaming logins. Share with the group something you need to change?

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4

11. How would Paul encourage us to act towards authorities? What is the end goal that Paul has in mind?

Prayers

Nicole Murray working with our Young Adults. Luke Murray working on Sundays as our Student Minister. Pray that their time in preparation is productive and good for all they serve.

We pray for Ministry Trainees Evan Caddy and Matt Peck, working alongside Brett and Sam.

Pray for Kylie Zietsch and Nonhlanhla Tshabalala and their work at Johannesburg Bible College, South Africa.

Praise God for our Bible Study leaders and for their faithful work in teaching and ministering to us throughout the term.

Study 5 How to be Ready - Romans 13:8-14

Share a time when you were running REALLY late for something?

Read Romans 13:8-10

1. How many times does Paul mention the word “love” in this passage? Why is love so important to Paul?

2. In verse 8, what does it mean when Paul encourages them to have a “*continuing debt to love one another*”?

3. Paul names a number of commandments. How are they summed up in the command to “*love your neighbour as yourself?*” (vv.9-10)

4. Who are *your* neighbours? Why is it hard to love them?

5. What are some practical ways we can love our neighbours?

Read Romans 13:11-14

6. Why do we need to wake from our sleep? What is soon coming? (v.11)

7. Paul talks about things of night and day, darkness and light. What do these images represent? How does he want Christians to live?

8. How can we put aside the deeds of darkness? Why is Jesus the only answer? (v.14)

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

9. Underline any similarities to Romans 13:11-14. What do Christians have to look forward to? (vv.9-10)

10. Why is it hard to live as if Jesus is returning? How can we be alert and ready for his return?

Prayers

Pray for Cam, Katrina, Peyton and Thea Harte. Pray for Cam as he heads up Children's Ministry, including KOS (Kids on Sunday), Primary Scripture, Children's Thursday arvo programs.

Pray for our ongoing and various Children's, Youth, and Young Adults Ministries; that God would be using the leaders and volunteers to sow seeds and help people grow into mature and loving relationships with Jesus. Pray that this would be a great witness to the wider community.

Pray for Marty & Katrina, Simeon, Jed and Luke Feltham, after they made the difficult decision to resign from CMS. Pray they can depend on God during this time as they think about where God wants them.

Study 6 How to be Free - Romans 14:1-15:13

Listen to “I’m free” by The Rolling Stones. What do you think is their version of freedom?

Read Romans 14:1-23

1. Who are the weak and the strong? What things were they disagreeing over?

2. How are the strong supposed to treat the weak? (v.1, 4, 10, 13-15, 19-21)

3. What is the principle of verses 5-8?

4. How does God as judge change the way I view my freedom? (vv.9-12)

Read Romans 15:1-13

5. How does Paul point to the example of Jesus (vv. 3-4)? How does he hope this will amend their actions?

6. What goal does Paul have for the two groups who are at odds (5-6)?

7. What is Paul's hope for these Christians as they give up their freedom for one another (vv. 7-13)?

8. What are some present-day things where there are "weak" Christians and "strong" Christians?

9. What things do you need to stop or give up for the sake of your "weaker" brothers or sisters?

10. How would you respond in the following situations?

- A member in your Bible Study has previously shared with you they are a recovering alcoholic. Next week your group is having a social dinner, where you know there will be beers and wines. Should you say anything?
- Harry is planning to organise a blokes console gaming night with his friends. He finds out that Ron struggles with gaming addiction and has decided not to play any video or computer games anymore. What could Fred do?
- Having read about inhumane practices in farming, Gina decides to go vegan. You think it is really stupid and over the top. Does Leah need to grow up?
- Everyone at church is talking about a new series on Netflix. You don't watch it because it has too much sex and crude jokes and you struggle with lust. Should you tell your friends at church that it bothers you?
- You notice after church in the courtyard your kids playing on their iphones and enjoying sharing what new apps they have. You know one of their friends Scott comes from a poorer family and finds it hard to be content. What could you do to help?

Prayers

Pray for Jess Moran as she oversees our Crèche and Playtime programs. We pray for energy and enthusiasm as she looks after this age group as well as providing support and encouragement for the parents.

Pray for Sam and Jess, Percy, Lois, Finn and Cleo Morton. Pray for Sam as our Services Pastor, preparing the elements, which make up our Sunday services. Pray for Sam as he also heads up Youth Ministry and high school Scripture.

Pray for our Church Wardens: Colin Adams, Helen Webster and Phil Moss. Pray for our Parish Councillors: Brendan Carpenter, Timothy Clipsham, Laurie Davidson, Amanda Garlato, Alex Kiefer, Kath Telfer and Simon Veltmeyer (also our treasurer). Pray for our Parish Nominators: Timothy Clipsham, Michael Easton, Alan Gibson, Amanda Garlato, Louise Parkes. Pray for our Synod Reps: Michael Easton and Amanda Garlato.